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ABSTRACT

Experience using a freshman writing magazine in basic Rhetoric classes at other colleges prompted the creation of a similar one at DeKalb College in Georgia. Building a coalition of supportive colleagues; composing a statement of purpose; and sending letters with the pertinent information to freshmen writers, colleagues, and high school English teachers, were all factors in the unanimous adoption of the idea. Students, teachers, and administrators realized many benefits from starting a freshman composition magazine. Advantages for the students included: (1) the opportunity to see in print models of the types of themes they were being assigned; (2) the development of better communication between student and teacher concerning the assigned essay; (3) the greater accessibility of information to help overcome barriers in their academic careers such as the essay components in the two required exit exams; (4) the promotion of more lively class sessions for debate on the freshman themes; (5) the chance to see their work published; and (6) the facilitation of quality peer interaction. Rewards for teachers were the fostering of better communication between faculty members, building of morale, and improvement in student writing. Administrators have used the publication as a recruiting device and have found that it gave the college status. Besides these benefits, and because of its self-supporting nature, the freshman writing magazine is receptive to changes in the curriculum and to the changing needs of students. (Fourteen figures are included and 20 references are appended.) (MS)

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HOW TO START A FRESHMAN WRITING MAGAZINE AND WHY

Sarah L. Larson
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DeKalb College, North Campus
Spring, 1988

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I. THE BIRTH OF A FRESHMAN WRITING MAGAZINE

As a graduate assistant and instructor at the University of Illinois in the late fifties and early sixties under the direction of Charles W. Roberts and Harris Wilson, I had the opportunity to use a freshman writing magazine, The Green Caldron, in my Rhetoric 100, 101, 102 classes. The publication generated a great deal of excitement in the classroom as the students bought it at the bookstore twice a semester and read their peers' thoughts, ideas, and experiences and better yet saw their own essays published. I realized that the magazine was a unique device to stimulate and to elevate student writing and to provide the freshman writer with a larger audience. I used those Green Caldrons in Mesa and City Colleges in San Diego, in Fayetteville at the University of Arkansas, and for eight years at DeKalb College in Georgia—all the time adding student papers to embellish my collection.

In the spring of 1984, as I fumbled through the yellowed pages to read those special themes and others, I realized that the time had come to create our own writing magazine at DeKalb College. I did not lightly undertake the project. I received guidance from Gordon M. Pradl of New York University who gave me suggestions on the thought process necessary to plan such a project. During the summer, I jotted down my

ideas in a number of entries in a journal which I have entitled "Thoughts on Creating a Freshman Writing Magazine." My jottings included some of the following observations:

> The fulfillment of the goal of publishing a freshman writing magazine will demand that I create a whirlpool of influence among those in power at DeKalb Community College. As I compile a list of those I must contact, I realize that each person has a vested interest in seeing such a project succeed. For example, the President of DeKalb College, Marvin M. Cole, has sought to promote the one college concept among our multi-campus faculty and toward that effort has stressed greater cooperation and communication between campuses. The writing magazine would achieve that close working relationship. Newly appointed Vice President for Academic Affairs, Martha T. Nesbitt, has always championed writing in her own history classroom and has attended our joint English meetings to promote writing across the curriculum. She has even allocated funds for a well-known speaker in that area. Surely the writing magazine is a vehicle to promote discussion and imitation and response college-wide. ("Thoughts" 1)

Another journal entry focused on the need to obtain response from my fellow English teachers in the county high schools:

> The next contact should be Marlene Caplan, Coordinator

> of the DeKalb County High School English Departments, who was co-chairperson of the Joint English Faculty's committee on articulation and who has been instrumental in preparing our joint questionnaire and in planning other combined meetings that addressed the needs of both institutions. The writing magazine would fit right into her plan to provide greater understanding and cooperation between high school and college since the names of the high schools would be printed on the cover. ("Thoughts" 2)

But my thoughts kept returning to my colleagues and their reaction to a freshman composition publication:

> My biggest hurdle will be to convince my overburdened colleagues of the merit of the project—from providing prose models for ease of instruction, to promoting classroom discussion, to elevating student writing college-wide. I must also stress the unifying aspect of the publication to counteract the professional jealousy that seems to be a factor whenever a new project is launched. The fear that the overzealous colleagues will use the publication to promote themselves as superior teachers will be alleviated by the plan to submit only the students' names, their English class without the section number, and their former high school. The plan to appoint a rotating editor yearly will also diffuse any attempt to use the publication for self-aggrandizement. ("Thoughts" 4)

I even wrote an editorial to convince myself of the need for a

magazine as I realized that I had to be fully committed to the idea before I could convince others. In that editorial, I looked back over my twenty years of teaching and argued that because of the narrative medium of television, descriptive writing with its appeal to the senses and narrative writing using stream of consciousness, flashbacks, action detail, and indeterminate ending had held their own or even improved. Even the journal was doing well—perhaps because of the confessional "no holds barred" interviews on talk shows. But the writing that was suffering was the expository and argumentative writing. I thought the freshman writing magazine could help fill that void:

> The writing magazine, then, would serve two functions. It would not only recognize progress in the area of personal writing but also place before us the work of students who are still thinking and wondering and would stimulate greater thought and discussion in the area of abstract, logical thinking—the area which is drying up instead of flowering.... More often, the English classroom would be a forum for ideas and lively discussion and argument. Student themes would encourage these ideas to flow from other students and enable them to see that being aware of issues beyond their personal needs and feelings can lift them to new heights of mental development. They would be challenged to write for a magazine totally within their range of ability without being overwhelmed by the prose models in anthologies written by professionals with impressive biographies and elaborate

> prose styles which may stifle their desires to question or to imitate. ("Editorial" 5)

The more reflecting I did on the need for the magazine the more confident I became of the value of the project. At every turn I saw a practical use for the magazine. As acting head of the North Campus English department that summer, I had the opportunity to work closely with adjunct or part-time instructors and to interview prospective teachers and students. They had a need to know what was expected of them beyond the sterile course outline and syllabi we provided. Over and over I thought how much more meaningful our discussion would be if I had samples of the students' writing; the teacher and student alike could see the curriculum at a glance—what was expected at all levels.

By the end of the summer with all the fervor of a lobbyist, I set about creating what I referred to earlier in my journal as a "whirlpool of influence" to convince my overworked colleagues and the administration of the advantages of the publication. My best work followed—probably because I had an audience in mind—as I drafted three letters—one to the freshman writer, another to my colleagues, and a third to the high school English teacher. I used the letters to generate support, mailing them to the administration including the other English division heads and following up with a phone call.

The stage was set to introduce the magazine to the joint English faculty of fifty full-time members. From this point on I have included a time table of that first year which does not contain the anxiety I had that September morning as I suggested

the project. I outlined the purpose and the plan and utilized the three letters along with the handing out of those well worn copies of The Green Caldron. I was ready for a barrage of questions and objections, but to my surprise the magazine was unanimously adopted. As I look back and visualize all those suntanned faces and relaxed bodies of my colleagues, I realize that fall is a good time to introduce the magazine. At the end of the meeting, I had several volunteers who wanted to represent their campuses—they liked the idea of the rotating editor which would give them a chance to make an imprint on the magazine.

Because I had done my homework in introducing the project to the administration, Martha Nesbitt, Vice President for Academic Affairs, awaited the outcome of the Joint English Faculty vote and then contacted a publisher. Peter Behan of Auxiliary Services wanting to serve the school and perhaps to realize a profit for the bookstore agreed to undertake the project. He said, "Just give the manuscript to me, and I'll do the rest."

The letter to the freshman writer was used immediately in all classes to introduce the magazine and to announce the "Name the Magazine" contest. By October first, the committee with two representatives from each campus and myself as rotating editor met to select the title from eighty-five entries. The Polishing Cloth suggested by Joey Brown was the title chosen, and I turned to the art department to set up another competition for the cover design. I became very bold and contacted Sandra Boynton, asking her permission to use some of her illustrations; she said that

THE BIRTH OF A FRESHMAN WRITING MAGAZINE AT DEKALB COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Timetable

September, 1984	The idea of a freshman composition magazine presented to the Joint English faculty through letters to freshman writers, colleagues, and high school teachers. Project unanimously adopted.
	Purpose: To stimulate and elevate student writing and to provide a larger audience for freshman writing at all levels; to create a vehicle for communication with large adjunct staff and articulation with high schools.
	Plan: Above-average or superior writing selected by instructor and permission granted by student. Selections and types from all levels, English 98, 99, 101, 102, and honors classes.
October, 1984	Freshman Writing Committee formed; two volunteers from each of the three campuses—Central, North, South, and a rotating Editor-at-Large. Announcement of writing magazine in classes and a "Name the Magazine Contest." Publisher contacted; 4000 copies ordered.
November, 1984	Title selected from 85 student entries: The Polishing Cloth. Student art chosen. Sandra Boynton's permission to use illustrations obtained; essay selection begun; method of judging papers outlined.
December, 1984	Essay selections made: Narration, Description, Exposition, Argumentation. 55 entries from instructors.
January, 1985	Typed copy proof-read and submitted to printer. Cover design planned. 44-page magazine.
February, 1985	Page-proofing. Selection of "Diamonds in the Rough" to fill unexpected blank pages.
March, 1985	Committee report at Joint English meeting. Selections discussed. Use of magazine promoted.
March 15, 1985	Distribution of magazine to colleagues and bookstore. 4,000 copies at $1.50 each.
April 1, 1985	DeKalb County High School English supervisor contacted. Magazine and tentative student evaluation form provided.
May 13, 1985	Student evaluation of magazine. Random selections of sections to be evaluated provided by Math Department. Results tabulated. Faculty evaluation of magazine.
May 17, 1985	Report of results of student and faculty evaluation. Recommendations made and adopted by faculty.
June, 1985	Selection process for Volume I, No. 2

Figure 1

DEKALB COLLEGE
NORTH·CENTRAL·SOUTH
NORTH CAMPUS • 2101 WOMACK ROAD • DUNWOODY, GEORGIA 30338

Dear Freshman Writer,

You have the unique opportunity to be published in DeKalb Community College's first Freshman Writing Magazine to be printed quarterly by the DeKalb College Print Shop. Each theme you write this quarter will be evaluated by your instructors for coherence, unity, development, and originality. Once they have selected your revised theme as an example of above average or superior composition, they will obtain your permission to publish it.

Selection of your theme by your instructor is the first step toward your receiving a wider audience for your composition. The theme is then considered by a panel of six English instructors, two from each campus—Central, South, and North—and an Editor at large. Your theme, if published, will identify you and the course—English 98, 99, 101, 102—and your high school. Research papers will also be published Winter Quarter.

As a student, you will be asked to purchase an issue of the magazine for use in the classroom. Issues will be available in your campus bookstore at the beginning of Winter Quarter for under $3.00 and will be a part of the required book list for your course. The magazine containing your work and that of your fellow students will provide prose models to help you understand the different types of themes, will stimulate and elevate your writing, and will act as a springboard for discussion in your classroom. At least one writing assignment will be an evaluation of one or more themes chosen or the issue as a whole and will be submitted by your instructor to the panel of judges.

Of course, the magazine offers the greatest possible opportunity for your being published, but it also gives you a chance to find out what your fellow classmen are experiencing, observing, and thinking. Best of all, at any time you can turn to one of the themes to guide you in your own writing. No longer will you have to wonder what the teacher wants.

Certainly any publication containing your writing deserves a better title than Freshman Writing Magazine. The English Departments are sponsoring a "Name the Magazine" contest. Please submit your suggestions to your instructor by November 16, 1984. Place your choice of title in a clearly marked envelope with your name, the course, and the section number. The winner will be announced at the end of Fall Quarter and will not only make an impact on literary history but also receive a special award from the English Department at Honors Day.

Figure 2

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Dear Colleague,

All of us have spent countless hours in defining course criteria, updating syllabi, and selecting textbooks. At the mention of committees, we often give each other the glazed-eyed look as if to say, "Here we go again." We also feel that we are the most overworked department in DeKalb College as we diligently strive to uphold standards, and we often feel that extra projects that keep us away from those important tasks of theme grading and lecture preparation are an unnecessary burden. But what if a committee created a vehicle to ease our task of communication and correcting? What if the efforts of that committee created a tool to accomplish in one fell swoop the goals of our Joint English meetings last year—articulation of the college and high school English programs, writing across the curriculum, and communication with our large adjunct staff? Wonder of wonders, I am describing the Freshman Writing Magazine.

We have all been looking for the textbook that gives us models to explain to our students what we mean by action details in the narrative, the appeal to the senses in the descriptive, the formation of a clearly stated thesis, the handling of the opposition, and the use of evidence and logical thinking. All the textbooks look alike after a while. They are all too general in nature as they attempt to be acceptable to a wide range of English programs. They aim for the high ground by giving us prose models by successful authors such as E. B. White, H. L. Mencken, Margaret Mead, C. S. Lewis, and Ellen Goodman. These authors do express their ideas very eloquently but often do not answer the need of the students for a simply stated theme within their capabilities written by a fellow student and following the outlines of our syllabi and course criteria. The Freshman Writing Magazine would provide those prose models we have been searching for.

I can hear you ask what this miracle of communication will require in the way of time and effort. Your role would be to submit throughout the quarter examples of freshman writing on all levels—98, 99, 101, and 102—to a joint committee representing South, Central, and North and a rotating editor at large. Since our students are products of a four or five year English program in the high school, we will be submitting their names, the course, and the name of their former high school along with a signed statement from the student granting permission to publish all or part of his composition. The

Figure 3

twenty to twenty-five page magazine will be published quarterly by the DeKalb College Print Shop for $1.00 and would be added to the list of texts to be purchased for the course. Perhaps the use of the magazine will help us reduce our list of textbooks in the future.

What would this Freshman Writing Magazine do for us in addition to providing models for our students, celebrating good student writing, giving a wider audience to the superior student, and promoting lively discussion in the classroom? The magazine would be a unifying vehicle for the English department itself, for as we work together to select the themes, we would discover what we all consider good writing, and we would do it without praise or blame but as a means of elevating student composition. The magazine would also give valuable guidance to our large adjunct staff as we provide concrete examples of the types of themes we are encouraging our students to write. Certainly the magazine could serve as a common ground for discussion and evaluation during our joint meetings with the adjuncts. Furthermore, the magazine would be a means of articulation for high school and the college. Since our names as instructors will not be printed in the magazine, but the names of the high schools will be mentioned, we are giving long over-due recognition to the efforts of our high school teachers who have struggled four or five years to guide the student writer, and at the same time, we are alerting the average high school student to the level of composition desired in the college classroom.

Perhaps I am over-stating the case for the writing magazine, but as an Instructor at the University of Illinois, I was privileged to submit student themes for publication in The Green Caldron, a freshman writing magazine. I know what it meant to me and to my students to identify good writing, to feel free to criticize compositions entirely within the capability of the average student, to focus on concerns of college freshmen, to recognize the best effort of the students, and to provide them with a larger audience. Please join with me in endorsing the Freshman Writing Magazine.

Sincerely,

Sarah L. Larson

Sarah L. Larson

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Dear DeKalb County High School English Teacher,

We as English instructors have a common bond. We are faced with stimulating and preparing our students to communicate in the simplest, easiest way. In an attempt to facilitate that goal, the DeKalb College English Department is announcing the publication of a Freshman Writing Magazine. English instructors from all three campuses—Central, South, and North—plan to select themes from our students' writing assignments and submit them to a joint committee composed of representatives from each English department. A rotating editor will also be selected at large each year to assure equal participation.

Through the efforts of the Joint English Faculty's Committee on Articulation of the English Programs in the College and High School, we have made great progress in communicating our needs and common goals. Our first effort was a joint questionnaire submitted to high school teachers and college instructors to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of student writing. Comments on that questionnaire from all instructors revealed the overwhelming desire to meet and to work together. Next, representatives from each faculty—high school and college—attended joint meetings. Continuing in our efforts to communicate and articulate, we invite three of your members to serve on the planning committee for the first issue of the magazine so that we may utilize their valuable ideas concerning the nature and content of the writing selected. We hope that after the magazine is successfully established one of your members would consent to serve on the six member selection committee.

We also plan to recognize your efforts as composition teachers in the format of the magazine. We realize that the college student is a product of your high school writing program. You have educated him for five years; we are privileged to influence him for only a quarter at a time and usually that equates to two quarters of composition. Keeping in mind your role in his formation as a writer, we plan to publish the students' names and the names of their high schools on the back cover of the magazine. The students' names, the titles of their themes or research papers, and the courses will be the only other identifying marks in the table of contents.

Let us hope that with the publication of the writing magazine, we can move together toward the elevation of student writing, make the high school student aware of the expectations of the college instructor, give the high school the opportunity to use the publication in the classroom, and award you, the high school English teacher, long over-due recognition for your superior effort.

Figure 4

she was "committed to freshman writing" and agreed to do so.

Using the "permission to publish" form I designed which includes the student's name, level, and title of the submission and the former high school, instructors felt very comfortable in turning in entries of their students' writing to the representatives on each campus since they could do so anonymously. The committee members expressed great satisfaction as they read and discussed the above-average and superior essays and term papers from three campuses. The excitement mounted as we selected eighteen papers from fifty-five entries to represent all levels of writing: 98 - 99 - 101 - 102 - honors.

We could not have foreseen the problem to follow when we received the galleys and had three blank pages. Luckily I had a list of student errors which I thought we might use to add some humor to the magazine. The committee originally vetoed the idea on the basis that including student mistakes was beneath the publication. But when they were faced with three blank pages, they adopted the suggestion and named the errors "Diamonds in the Rough" as an extension of the logo of The Polishing Cloth. In subsequent issues, a student artist, Walt Griffin, has illustrated the dangling modifiers, misplaced modifiers and diction or spelling errors, and they have become a popular feature of our magazine and also a learning device.

Since the committee had pledged to the Joint English Faculty that we would evaluate the magazine, I designed a form to easily show approval or disapproval. Lane Hardy of the mathematics de-

Freshman Writing Magazine

DeKalb Community College

Name of student _____

Title of theme or research paper _____

_____

Course _____

High school attended _____

* City * * State *

Permission to Publish

The DeKalb College Freshman Writing Magazine has my permission to publish all or part of my composition or research paper.

_____

Signature of student writer

Please staple this information and permission to publish to your revised theme.

Freshman Writing Magazine
Committee - North-Central-South

Figure 5

partment selected randomly the sections to be evaluated. The committee had a "hands-off policy" as the forms were collected by the department secretaries and funneled to a student assistant who ran them through the scantron and reported the results to the mathematics department for analysis. The results showed what those of us who had used the magazine had already confirmed in our classrooms: the students overwhelmingly approved of the magazine. The only disappointing factor was the large number of "no comments" registered; the written evaluation indicated that many of the students so responding had not purchased the magazine and therefore felt unqualified to evaluate it. The most frequently recorded response was the desire for a longer magazine, and we obliged, making the next one twice as long.

The committee also solicited written anonymous comments from the tri-campus English faculty. We compiled them, including them in a report along with the results of the student evaluation. Based on our colleagues' suggestions, we made two major recommendations—that the magazine should be optional to faculty who wish to use it and that the publication should be published fall and spring. These were adopted by the Joint English Faculty at the meeting of May 17, 1985. Since then The Polishing Cloth committee has published four more editions and the price at the college bookstore is $2.75 a copy.

It is clear that much planning needs to go into any worthwhile endeavor. Thinking carefully about the writing magazine project, using the journal and the editorial, helped me to clarify

Dear Colleague,

Because of the limited amount of time and the need for a report on May 17, 1985, The Polishing Cloth committee has requested that Dr. Lane Hardy select at random the sections to be evaluated. Your class has been chosen for the evaluation. Please have the students use a #2 pencil; place all scantrons and questionnaires in the original mailer; return it to the English Department secretary on your campus by Wednesday, May 15, at 5:00 p.m.

Thank you for your help. We intend to have some feedback from all sections near the end of the quarter.

The Polishing Cloth Committee

Instructions for Students:

1. Do not place your name on the scantron sheet. In the space marked "Name" put your section #.
2. In the space marked "Subject" put the course description (i.e. Eng. 98)
3. Fill out the date and time spaces as usual.
4. Respond to questionnaire on scantron sheet.
5. Students comments should be written on the questionnaire.
6. Thank you for your response.

Figure 6

The Polishing Cloth

Course_____ Section Number_____

Place on SCAN-TRON form

Directions: This survey gives you an opportunity to express your views concerning The Polishing Cloth, a required text in 98, 99, 101, 102, and honors courses this quarter. The results will be used to evaluate The Polishing Cloth and to aid in deciding its use in the classroom.

(A) Strongly agree (B) Agree (C) No opinion (D) Disagree (E) Strongly Disagree

1. The magazine was used in the classroom.
2. I read several of the examples of student writing.
3. The magazine was helpful in providing examples of how to write.
4. I enjoyed reading essays by DeKalb College students.
5. The magazine made me realize how important clear writing is in the communication of ideas.
6. The publication encouraged me to do my best writing.
7. I have used or will use The Polishing Cloth as I write or prepare to write a paragraph, theme, or term paper.
8. The magazine provides a valuable opportunity for student writing to be published.
9. The Polishing Cloth helped me understand the different theme types - narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative.
10. I would like to have the magazine used as a required part of the course.
11. The magazine is an attractive publication - cover, print, illustrations, art work.
12. The price of the magazine at $1.50 is reasonable.
13. I enjoyed reading "Diamonds in the Rough."
14. "Diamonds in the Rough" provided good examples of errors to be avoided.
15. The magazine gave me a better understanding of the role of the thesis in composition.
16. The Polishing Cloth's themes and term papers gave me a good idea of what type of composition is expected at all levels - 98-99-101-102-honors.
17. I am more aware of standards of English composition at DeKalb Community College as a result of this publication.

Figure 7

18. The Polishing Cloth helped me to understand the two types of outlines- topic and sentence.
19. The magazine addressed timely topics - acid rain, divorce, television commercials, ethics in government, teen suicide.
20. The Polishing Cloth was one of the most helpful texts used this quarter in providing concrete examples of different types of writing.

[101-102 Only]

21. I read the Regents' essay, "Coffee, Anyone?"
22. The essay helped me to understand the structure of a Regents' theme and the need for specific detail in developing an abstract topic.
23. The Polishing Cloth showed me how to logically develop a literary or argumentative topic for a theme or term paper.
24. The magazine helped me learn how to use and to introduce sources in an essay or term paper.
25. The Polishing Cloth introduced me to a variety of styles of writing.

Student Comment

1. Most helpful aspect of The Polishing Cloth. _____

_____

_____

_____

2. Least helpful aspect of The Polishing Cloth. _____

_____

_____

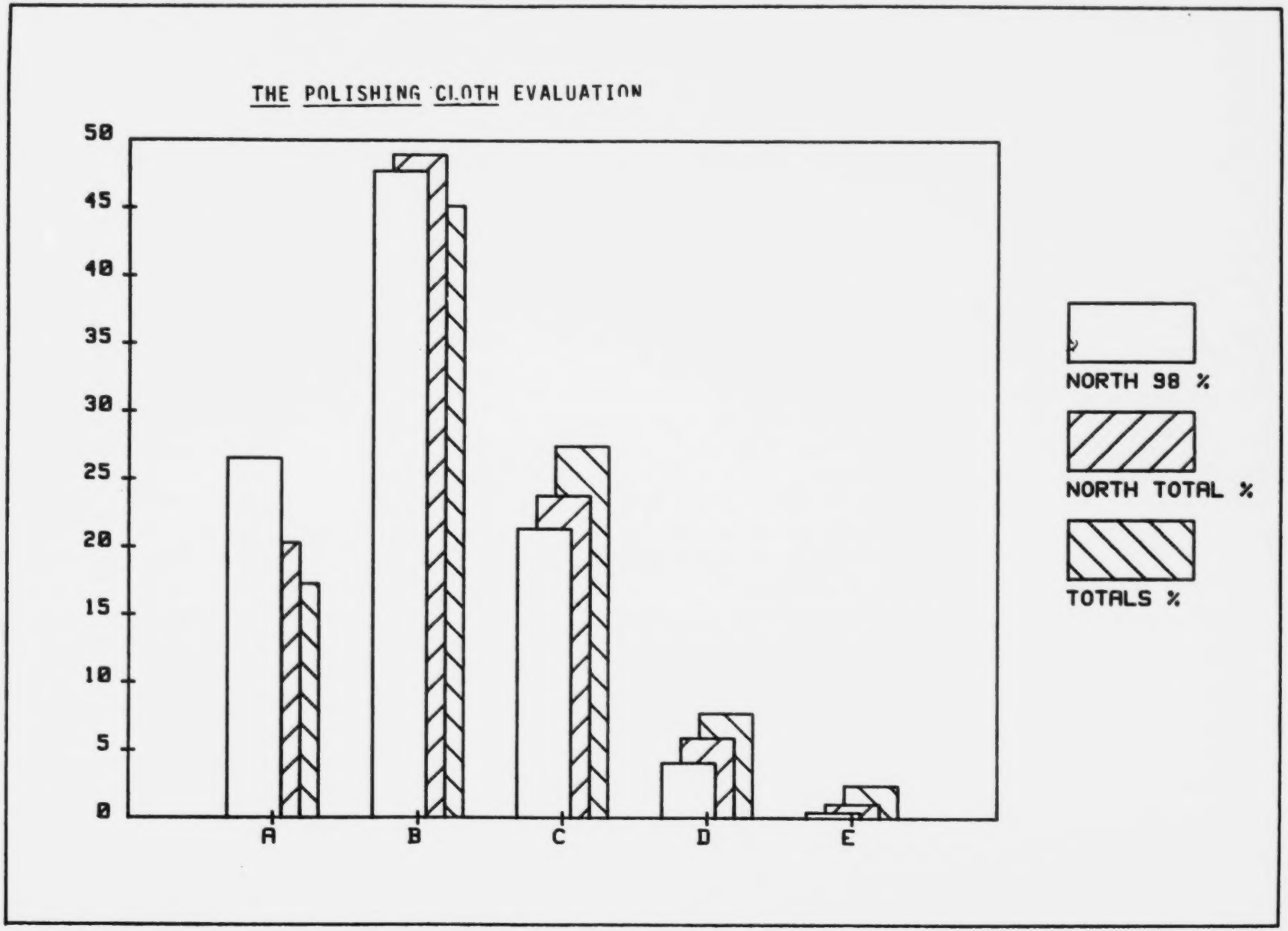
_____

Figure 7 (continued)

THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION

ENGLISH	A (Strongly Agree)	B (Agree)	C (No Opinion)	D (Dis agree)	E (Strongly disagree)	TOTALS
98-North	190	343	153	29	3	718
North 98%	26.5%	47.8%	21.3%	4.0%	0.4%	100
99-North	112	357	178	62	21	730
North 99%	15.3%	48.9%	24.4%	8.5%	2.9%	100
101-North	382	881	431	101	20	1815
North 101%	21.0%	48.5%	23.7%	5.6%	1.1%	100
102-North	407	1049	517	126	15	2114
North 102%	19.3%	49.6%	24.5%	6.0%	0.7%	100
Total-North	1091	2630	1279	318	59	5377
North Total %	20.3%	48.9%	23.8%	5.9%	1.1%	100
Total-Central	922	2631	1917	591	217	6278
Central Total %	14.7%	41.9%	30.5%	9.4%	3.5%	100
TOTALS	2013	5261	3196	909	276	11655
TOTALS %	17.3%	45.1%	27.4%	7.8%	2.4%	100

Figure 8


THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION
50
45
40
35
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10
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0
A
B
C
D
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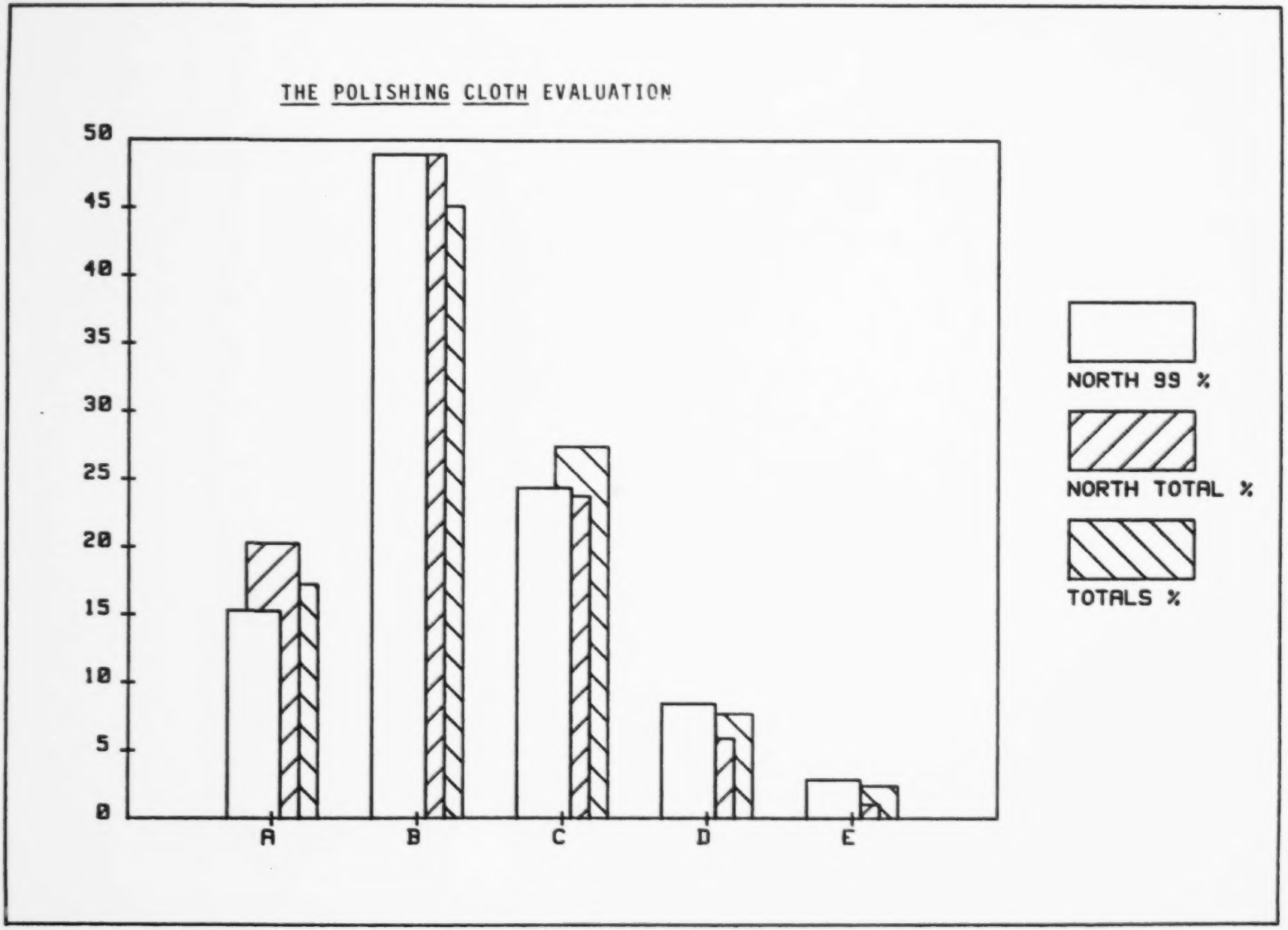
NORTH 98 %
NORTH TOTAL %
TOTALS %

Figure 9


THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION
50
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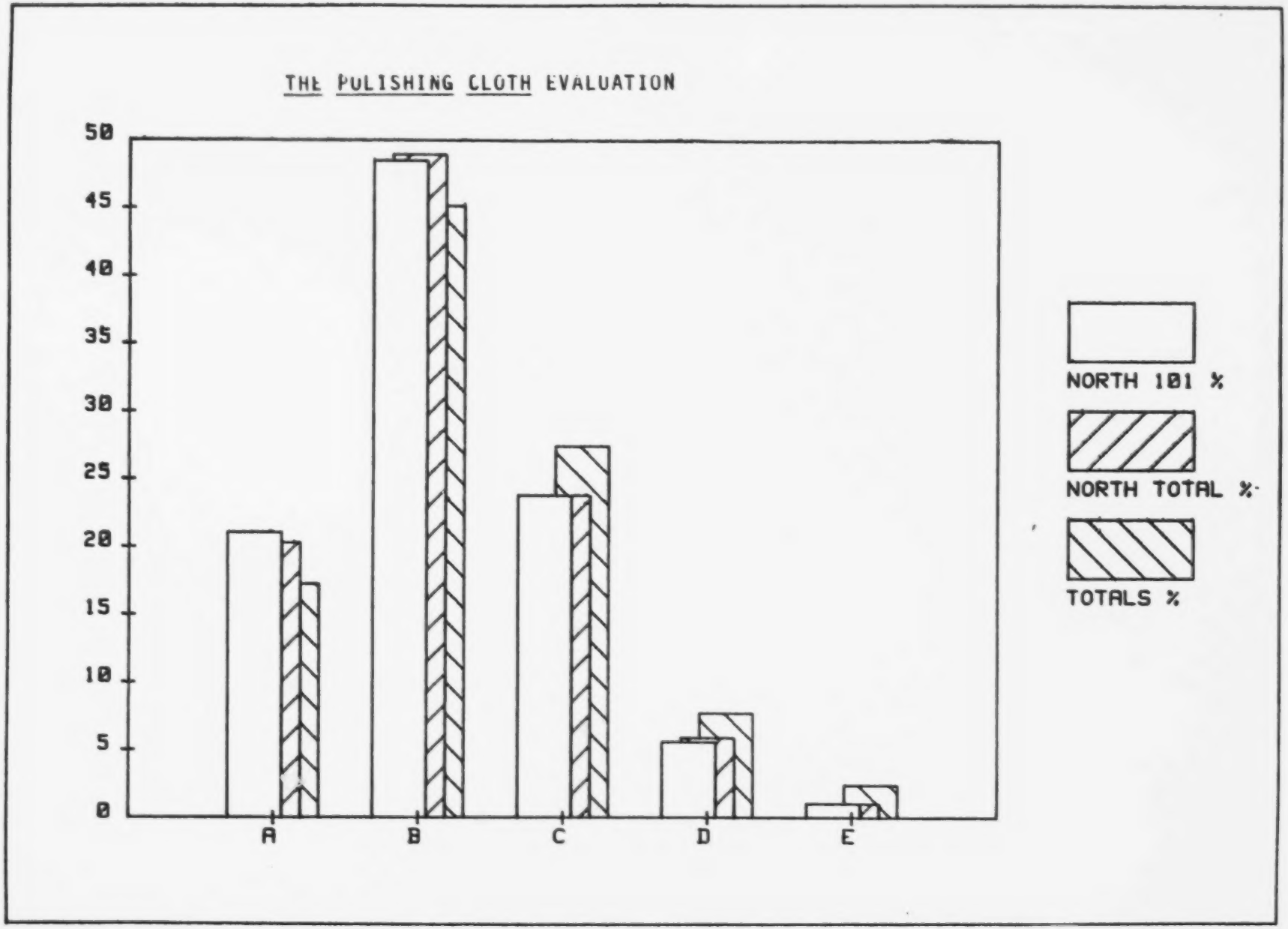
NORTH 99 %
NORTH TOTAL %
TOTALS %

Figure 10


THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION
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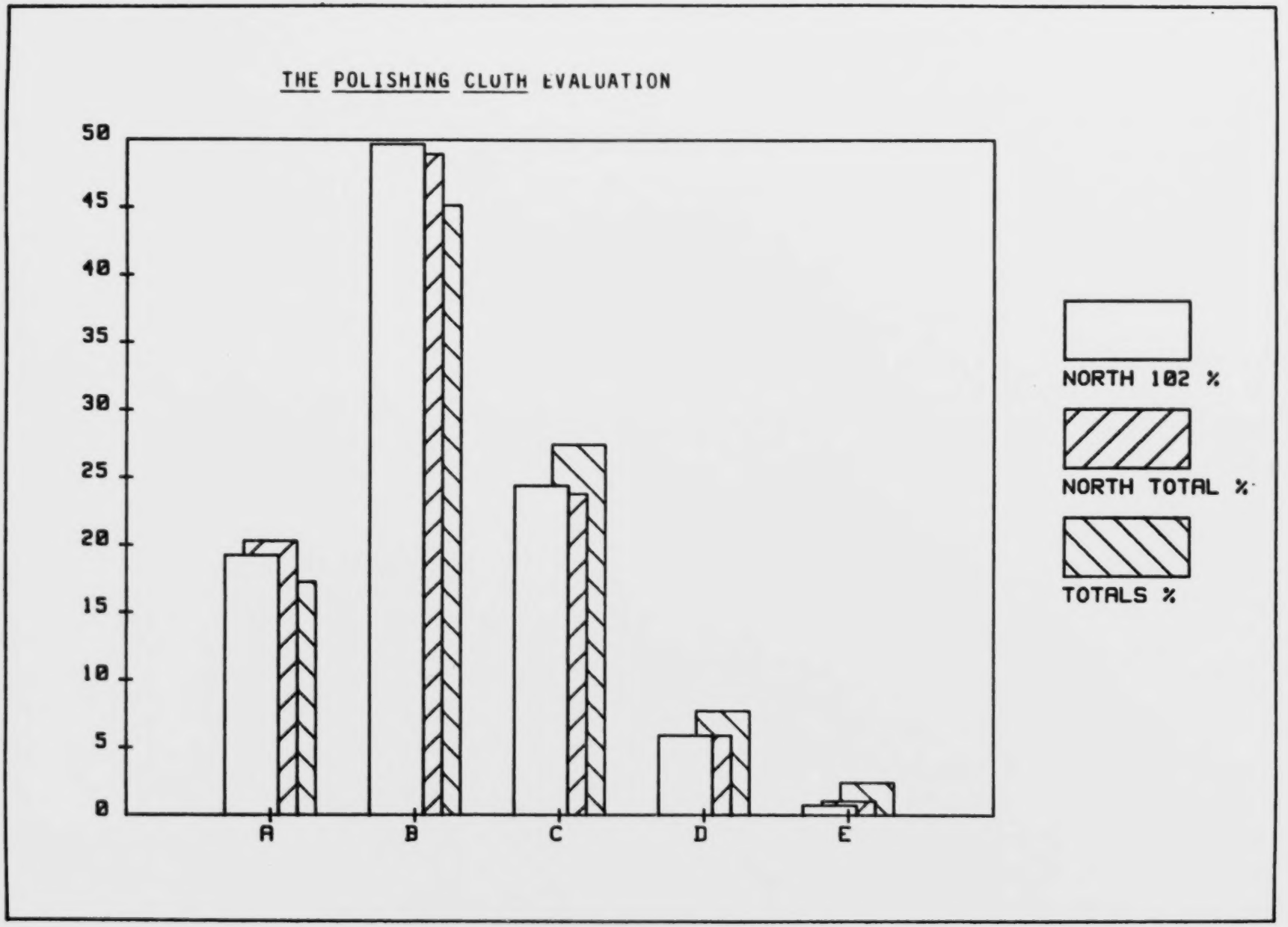
NORTH 101 %
NORTH TOTAL %
TOTALS %

Figure 11


THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION
50
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25
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5
0
A
B
C
D
E
NORTH 102 %
NORTH TOTAL %
TOTALS %

Figure 12

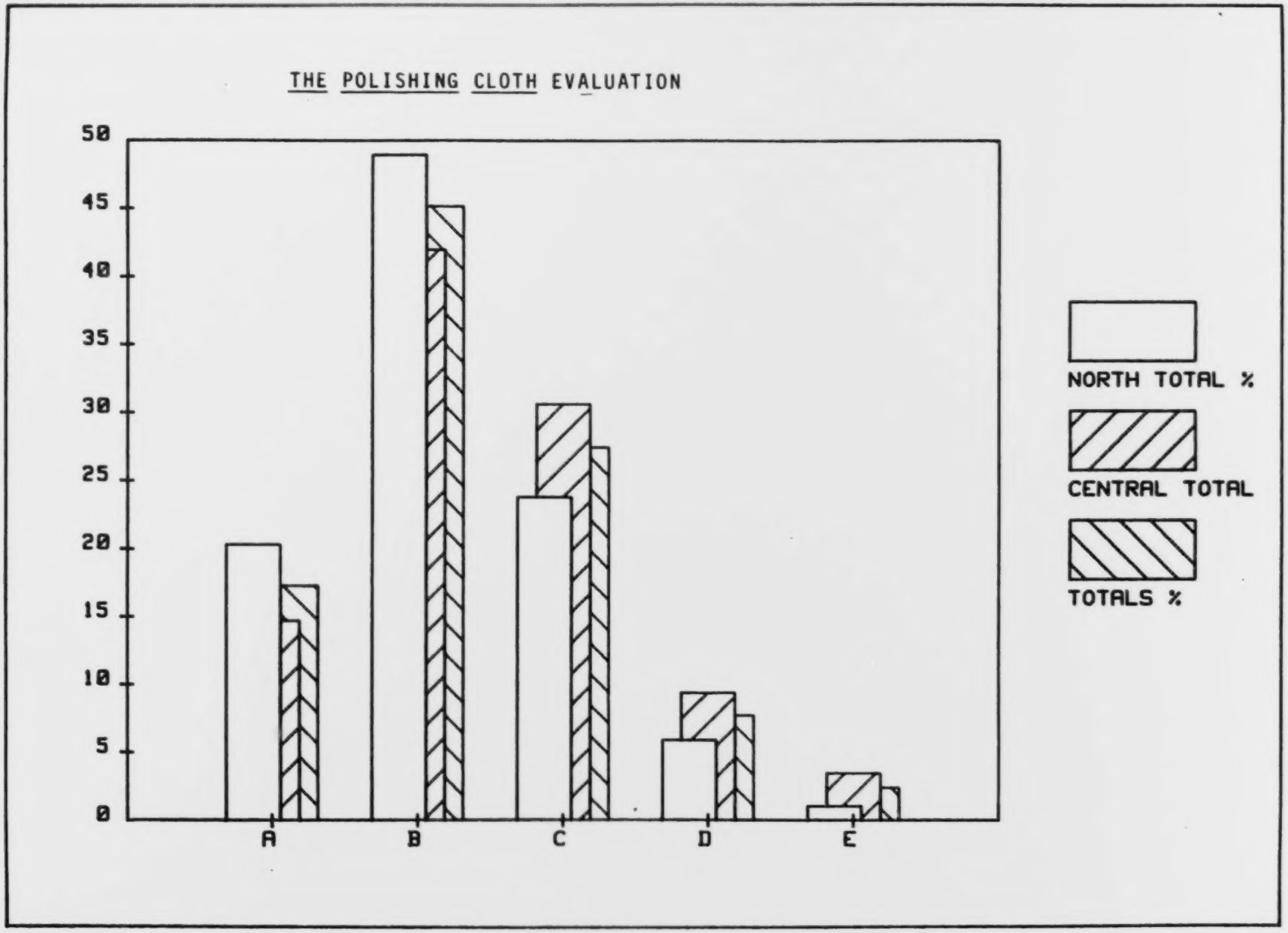
THE POLISHING CLOTH EVALUATION
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
A
B
C
D
E
NORTH TOTAL %
CENTRAL TOTAL
TOTALS %

Figure 13

The Report of The Polishing Cloth Committee
for the
May 17, 1985 Joint English Meeting

Major criticism of the magazine from the faculty:

98 Papers	-	not representative
	-	more third person papers needed
99 Papers	-	greater diversity in types of expository writing needed
	-	less emphasis on narrative
	-	more third person examples desired
101 Papers	-	a literary comparison and contrast paper needed -
	-	greater emphasis on types of expository writing needed
102 Papers	-	current M.L.A. style sheet should be reflected in all reference papers

Please give us your papers so that we can meet these needs.

Recommendations to the Joint English Faculty

1. The magazine should be optional to those faculty who wish to use it.

2. The magazine should be published fall and spring.

Figure 14

my motivations and objectives. Actually writing letters to those directly involved allowed me to focus on the advantages for the student, the English instructor, and the high school teacher. The letters were particularly helpful not only in finding my voice and my audience but also in promoting the magazine by persuading those in power of the value of the project. Being willing to subject the magazine to the scrutiny of the students and the faculty empowers the researcher, regardless of the findings. And more than ever, I realized the importance of creating that whirlpool of influence that will allow those who want to promote literacy to join hands to make it all possible.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF STARTING A MAGAZINE OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

What are the benefits of starting a freshman composition magazine? Since any endeavor takes thought and energy and perseverance, the advantages should far outweigh the problems and the effort involved. In recounting the beginnings of the writing magazine at DeKalb College, I indirectly or directly argued that such a publication has rewards for the student, the teacher, and the administrator, but a new dimension has been added by the publishers in their demand for examples of student writing to make textbooks more realistic and understandable. Perhaps listing the advantages of starting a magazine category by category might help the readers to sharpen their focus and to discern if the publication warrants their attention and effort.

For the students, the opportunity to see in print models of

the types of themes they are being assigned is a major reason to support the magazine. Now educators may ask what benefits may accrue from having one student paper serve as a model for other student writers. They may argue that a young writer needs to imitate the diverse prose styles of such noted writers as E. B. White, Tom Wolfe, Norman Mailer, C. S. Lewis, and Russell Baker found in popular anthologies. On the contrary, students need to visualize fellow students writing similar type themes. Because they feel that such writing is within their capability, they freely analyze, grade, criticize, or praise their peers' efforts. James Britton confirms the importance of this peer interaction in his essay "Talking to Learn" where he observes that "we need to recognize that the network of people related to us by shared values provides, at every stage of life, the primary context for our learning of both varieties—both coming to know and refining our value systems" (106). Jane Hansen adds in "Organizing Student Learning: Teachers Teach What and How" that "peer writers support each other, protect each other against non-productive forces, and encourage each other's goals" (321).

Essays regularly appearing in prose anthologies such as Margaret Mead's "One Vote for this Age of Anxiety" and H.L. Mencken's "Reflection on War" are stimulating and thought-provoking but are removed from the students' life experience and are often intimidating because the sophisticated prose style is beyond their reach. The students should not be in awe of prose models but should feel that with effort and revision and wider reading, they, too, could compose an essay that could be published, read, and discussed by

a larger audience. Every writing assignment or journal entry provides an opportunity for the student to be published. The average number of essays submitted to the editor from each of my classes per quarter is twenty-five, and an excitement is generated and a heightened class morale achieved by the very act of suggesting that "this paper has the chance of being published in The Polishing Cloth." In my tutorial session with James Britton at Oxford, England, he commented that "a major benefit of a writing magazine such as The Polishing Cloth is that it provides an audience" (Interview, July 27, 1987)—each issue is purchased by two thousand students. Those DeKalb College writers published by Harcourt-Brace textbooks have a readership of many more thousands.

The prose models from the magazine also help the student to communicate more effectively with the teacher concerning the essay assigned. Regardless of how carefully the instructor prepares the students in their pre-composing activities, some students remain confused and anxious because they do not have an example before them. The idea of "plunging in" in the narrative theme, filling in with details, using dialogue, and then "just leaving us there" in the story is before them in student themes in the writing magazine. The use of the senses, specific adjectives, and energetic verbs in the descriptive essay; the careful construction of a thesis and its detailed development in the expository; the important second paragraph in destroying the opposition and then the building of the case with evidence and logical think-

ing in the argumentative—all these strategies need to be revealed to the student in a concrete, accessible way. This magazine, if adopted, would provide the vital link in communicating to the student writers the purpose of composition, the importance of clearly stated or implied ideas, and the level they should strive for or perhaps surpass.

One of the most popular aspects of the magazine from the students' point of view is the information given to them to help overcome barriers in their academic careers. In the Regents' System of the State of Georgia, testing requirements include two exit tests—one from the English 99 level class, the Basic Skills Exam, and another referred to as the Rising Junior Exam or the Regents' Test. The two essay components of these exams—a four paragraph BSE and a five paragraph Regents'—need to be practiced several times in the classroom in order for the student to feel more comfortable with the types of topics assigned and the time limit imposed. The Polishing Cloth is in great demand at these testing times because the samples provided let writers in on the secret of passing the essays. Not only are the actual Regents' topics written on in each issue but also the requirements for passing are revealed: at least three sentences before the thesis—which had better be there—and a detailed development of that thesis in four or five paragraphs and a conclusion of similar length to the introduction but with a sense of closure.

The students need to see by examples provided that the secret of passing these exit exams is not only to make sure they write

on the topic chosen and to be aware of the form desired but also to avoid repetition of detail. As they study each Regents' essay, they can see that the compositions contain sharp, logical divisions of the thesis which need to be developed in five to seven sentences or one hundred-fifty words per body paragraph. Either technique—that of providing three different aspects of the thesis or that of developing a contrastive paragraph before building a two paragraph case—gives students the best chance of receiving a passing rating.

The Polishing Cloth is the major resource used in the Regents' Test Preparation seminars given quarterly at DeKalb College, North, and is the primary text used in the Regents' Test Preparation five week course. All students who have failed the Regents' Test twice must enroll in RTP 080. With the help of The Polishing Cloth, the course had a 100% pass rate spring quarter, and in the course evaluation, the magazine was highly rated as a teaching tool. The popularity of the "How to" manuals in preparing students for such tests as the SAT, GRE, and MCAT is not only an American phenomenon; in Great Britain Amory Gethin's How to Succeed in Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English is in demand. The text contains "model answers" for essay questions which it claims "are real compositions written by students preparing for the Proficiency exam" (38). Clearly a writing magazine allows any institution to tailor a publication to include the kinds of themes and assignments which reflect the requirements and point of view of its special writing programs. Helping students at all levels to overcome their fear

of testing by showing them succinctly what others have done to pass relieves the anxiety in the classroom and frees the students to go on to other projects that usually allow for an even greater opportunity to learn.

The presence of a writing magazine also promotes lively class sessions as the students debate the burning issues contained in freshman themes. Such debate over the socio-politico-economic issues encourages students to become more interesting, informed writers and citizens. The editors of The Polishing Cloth make a real effort to publish papers on both sides of a controversial topic. Previous issues have contained pro-con nuclear energy and pro-con rating of records; the latest edition includes arguments for and against tort reform and Star Wars. As the students contemplate both sides of the issue as presented in The Polishing Cloth, more often the English classroom becomes a forum for ideas and discussion and debate.

Good things happen in the classroom when students find out that other student writers care about national and international issues. First of all they become aware of the controversy through reading the magazine; they often become more tolerant of another's point of view; they are more eager not only to read more widely on the topic but also to define their own concerns. It is at this point that they find as does James Britton in his essay, "Shaping to the Point of Utterance:"

> That to embark on a conversational utterance is to take a certain responsibility to stake a claim that

> calls for justification: and perhaps it is social pressure on the speaker to justify his claim that gives talk an edge over silent brooding as a problem-solving procedure. (139)

The group discussion of these papers stimulates and refines the students' thinking to such an extent that their writing markedly improves. Once they have formed their points of view on any controversial topic through conversation, they can turn to The Polishing Cloth to find out how to shore up an argument, using evidence, authority, logical thinking and emotion to convince the reader of their way of thinking. Moreover, as they write their persuasive essay, it is clear to them who their audience is, and they more readily achieve personal growth and skill in writing because,as Jane Hansen confirms, the students are more interested in communicating their ideas to their peers than they are with impressing the instructor:

> The writer feels the urgency when his or her classmates really want to know more. The interest of classmates has more effect on writers than the teacher's interest because the students care more about writing something their friends find interesting than writing something to please the teacher. (329)

The Freshman writers at DeKalb are aware that all levels of writing—English 98, 99, 101, 102, honors—are celebrated in The Polishing Cloth. This recognition of the efforts of writers regardless of SAT or BSE verbal placement is especially important

to the developmental studies student who is often given the impression that he is a second class citizen in the college program. As a result of the institutional testing and labeling and segregating of these students, they often feel as if they have nothing worth saying and fail to value their own writing, thinking it is only a means to get on to the next level. Those who have taught developmental or remedial students know that some of the most powerful narratives and sensual descriptions are created in these classes perhaps because many of the students have dared to live more fully. Expository and argumentative topics are also developed in a clear, logical manner. The publishing of these paragraphs and essays gives the 98-99 students the realization that their thoughts are worthy of recognition; the printing of their work gives them status. As a result, submission of their paragraphs and essays to The Polishing Cloth often gives the developmental students the incentive to continue their studies confidently with the realization that they have something important to say.

Some great success stories can be told of developmental students such as Richard M. Davis whose 98 paragraph "What Happened to the American Family?" was included in one issue of The Polishing Cloth and then later his 102 critical analysis of Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" in the Spring/Summer 1987 publication (67). Richard observed that it was being published in The Polishing Cloth as a remedial student that convinced him of the value of his composition and that the recognition was a "major

factor" in his "determination" to maintain a high level of composition in his succeeding classes. Maggie McElreath had a similar story to tell, starting out with a 98 journal entry, "A Tale of Childhood" (7) being printed and then seeing her 101 literary analysis of Eudora Welty's "Death of a Traveling Salesman" selected (35). Authors of Re-writing Writing: A Rhetoric and a best seller Rhetoric Made Plain, Jo Ray McCuen and Anthony C. Winkler, have honored the remedial students by choosing their essays as models of good writing. Byron T. Barnes' "Iwo Jima" (3), Larry James' "An Argument Against Controlling Acid Rain" (1) and Jan Nelson's "Cozumel" (7) have now received national recognition—with no remedial labels attached.

But such stimulus to write is not limited to the developmental students. Over three hundred students have been published in the magazine since its inception in the spring of 1985. Not only do students feel the excitement when they are asked to submit their papers, but they are also motivated to revise and polish their work so that they have the best chance of getting chosen for print. Almost every class has one or two students who are published and the feeling is generated "If they can do it, why can't I?" Certainly the above average and superior writers at every level receive the greatest outlet for their ideas. No longer are they limited to a class of thirty readers; their audience is extended to 2000 purchasers of the magazine. They can reach that larger audience of peers and are genuinely inspired to continue their composition and at the same time help to lift

their immediate classmates to a new level of understanding. Since studies reveal that peer influence is a pervasive force in the classroom, they can assume the role of tutor to stimulate richer writing in the classroom. M. Trika Smith-Burke in her extensive study of "Classroom Practices and Classroom Interaction during Reading Instruction: What's Going On?" examines the influence of peer tutoring and reports:

> Students used richer language in all student situations than in exchanges with the teacher (Barnes 1976; Cooper, Marquis, and Ayers-Lopez 1982). Developmental patterns of communicative competence were also evident (Cooper, Marquis, and Ayers-Lopez 1982)....The tutoring role permits [students] to communicate in ways quite different from typical, whole-class exchanges. Teachers also see students' abilities in a different light. (246)

The Polishing Cloth essays clearly facilitate the three models of peer interaction designated by "Cazden (1980): (1) peer tutoring in which one student is clearly more knowledgeable; (2) equal-status collaboration; and (3) coteaching, in which the resource and learner roles shift back and forth" (Smith-Burke 246). Students benefit from the focus on their writing which may facilitate the formulation of "'whole language' or language across the curriculum programs commonly used in non-traditional classrooms. In this type of approach, planning, writing, editing, and revising in peer conferences are used in writing activities with real purposes and audiences in mind,...

a rich literary environment which promotes language and learning" (Smith-Burke 244).

But many of my colleagues maintain that it is the teacher who receives the most gain from the student publication. Comments such as, "I don't know how I ever got along without it" are common among those of us who use the magazine in our composition classes and even in our literature classes to, among other things, remind students of the method of introducing and citing sources. Teaching can be a very lonely profession, and the magazine fosters good communication between faculty members in their discussion of what good writing is and how best to achieve a climate in the classroom to promote it. Certainly in a multi-campus institution as we have at DeKalb, the magazine serves as a unifying factor, but any institution will realize benefits from discussing how to help students say something in the most explicit, effective manner.

Many of us are teaching because of the emotional rewards the classroom gives us. But once in a while we are dragged down by the overwhelming responsibility of helping our students to become literate. The magazine serves as a morale builder for the faculty members who can give their students a chance to publish and then see their cooperative efforts in print. The teacher often identifies with the students' progress, and as the published student contacts her professor for an advance copy of the magazine, I hear exclamations of joy and sometimes see a few tears shed. There is an emotional bond created between writers and their

mentors that personalizes a very impersonal process of education. Of the fifty-two students I have had published in five issues of The Polishing Cloth, I can state almost without exception where they are and what they are doing because they keep me informed either through a conversation in my office or a note in the mail. I have had a similar relationship with my own college English teacher, Adele Kennedy, whom I have corresponded with for thirty years and who encouraged me to write and to attend graduate school. Unfortunately two of our published students have died in automobile accidents, and their freshman writing has become even more precious to the students' families. As the relatives of Alice Egan, mother, honor student, peer tutor in both English and math, expert weaver, and Brad Stephens, president of the honors club, Chief Justice of the student court, and lover of horses, have contacted me, I have sent multiple copies of The Polishing Cloth to the grieving families. The written word contains life.

Those colleagues who use the magazine also maintain that the publication has encouraged their students to write better. Perhaps part of their feeling about the successful role of the magazine is that at last they have a vehicle for an improved curriculum—which Jerome C. Harste of Indiana University defines as a place "where theory and practice transact" (358). He states that the keys to the advancement of this practical theory are "collaboration between researchers and teachers, teachers and students, evaluators and evaluatees and reflexively for learners as teachers and teachers as learners" (358). The instructors at DeKalb College find that

they have in The Polishing Cloth a usable text which "both Shallert and Calfee indicate is an interactive enterprise between reader and author which requires an awareness of the other as well as the topic, and that is function driven—its creation driven by a guiding purpose" (Langer 110). If an English faculty have many examples of student writing as a text, they can be creative and imaginative with the applications and actually compose their own textbook. Judith Langer states that she and Arthur Applebee have been studying writing in secondary schools for the past four years, and the teachers that they work with "have all but given up on texts" because they are so "badly written" (112). What teachers at any institution could do is to start their own writing magazine, and they will have a text that allows them and their students to make it their own.

Some composition instructors, no matter how long they have been teaching, feel very tentative about what good writing is, and others have become fossilized in their staunch conviction that they have all the answers to effective composition. The magazine allows both camps to submit their compositions anonymously to test the waters—without being identified. Real learning for the instructor takes place not only when the composition is printed but also when it is rejected. A chance to re-examine teaching styles and methods takes place not only in the submission process but also in the analysis of what essays were included and why.

My fellow English teachers and I too often have made the observation that we are the only ones taking papers home to correct.

There has to be some pride involved in that self-pity that makes us feel that somehow we martyrs are making a concerted, if a lonely, effort to allow students to be introduced to greater understanding of themselves and their roles in the complex world. But what about allowing ourselves the same opportunity? Let us not feel guilty if we have found ways to foster learning that don't drag us down with them. If no other reason moves an English faculty to adopt a writing magazine, the realization that the publication cuts down on our workload should be a deciding factor. Faculty can still go through all the prewriting excitement with their classes, but they do not have to generate as many handouts or to photocopy as many examples because the papers published reveal multiple examples of types of themes, outlines, use of sources, and citing of those sources—all in a very readable, understandable form.

A myriad of group activities centered on The Polishing Cloth can also be introduced from grading the essays, ranking the papers, finding the main ideas, exploring effective introductions and conclusions, testing the logic, and using sources—all with the teacher in the observer role. Another idea of freeing up the students to look at their own narratives came from Andrew Stibbs, a professor of English education from the University of Leeds who suggested taking a story from The Polishing Cloth and rewriting it in one sentence, then reducing the story to sixty words. From that point on the student has the option of rewriting the story from "a different point of view, a different genre, or a different

narrative sequence." If time allows, the student could "rewrite it in a way that would subvert a reader's generic expectations" (Journal 48). All of these group interactions are ungraded and rely on peer assessment but are invaluable in helping students to help each other become better writers and critics. Psychologist Jerome Bruner validates the importance of group work, citing Vygotsky's research and his own "scaffolding" theory to confirm how the "more competent" help the "less competent" to reach the "higher ground" of learning (73). With students paving the way for other students, a very real sense of freedom comes for their instructor from the published papers in the writing magazine. We as teachers should seize the chance to lighten our teaching task.

As in other institutions, the most important role of a teacher at DeKalb College is to bring about student learning. Aside from student evaluations and classroom visitations, it is often very difficult for an instructor to provide proof of good teaching. Because DeKalb College has recently joined the State of Georgia Regents' System, a ranking procedure took place at all three campuses in 1986. Each instructor was asked to write an account of his/her role as a teacher and to cite examples and statistics of his/her effective work. Those teachers who had contributed essays to The Polishing Cloth and had succeeded in getting them published cited the students' names and the titles of their essays to shore up their records as successful educators. They commented on the helpful nature of The Polishing Cloth in their achieving their desired rank—a bonus they had not foreseen. The same assertions have been made about the magazine's role in obtaining tenure.

Now let's tackle the dreaded word "accountability" and all that the process implies. No matter how hard we resist it, maintaining that real learning cannot be quantitatively measured and that such efforts only stifle intellectual growth, in the world celebrating technology we are going to have to feel the straight jacket of such measures imposed on us or to create our own instrument for the evaluation process. The Polishing Cloth or any writing magazine becomes an accountability instrument that surpasses pre-test, post-test, exit requirements. The publication allows any interested party, inside the institution or outside, to see the English program at a glance. If changes need to be made, it is easier for the English department itself to see where it might begin. But more often such a magazine is a verification of the efforts of the English teachers and allows them to obviate the need for curriculum overhaul since with every issue of The Polishing Cloth they are carrying out their own self study.

For the The Polishing Cloth committee member who selects the entries and edits the magazine, the rewards are often more pronounced, and some are less lofty and more pragmatic. If such a magazine is adopted, I can predict as a result of our experience that it will become one of the administration's favorite publications because it focuses on student work and because as earlier stated it is an accountability instrument, and those who work on it are considered valuable employees—team players. Moreover, it is a way for a concerned group of representatives from each campus

to gradually introduce new ideas to a very traditional English department. Before our first issue of The Polishing Cloth included a journal entry, the concept of using journal writing to communicate with students was not widely utilized. Now many of the instructors are trying the technique and are very pleased with the variety of ways they can use the journals to foster insight and response. As writing employing a sentence or a topic outline was printed and analyzed, a controversy developed over which outline form produced the most effective writing style. Printing both approaches allowed the English department faculty to view differences and to come to their own conclusions. As a result of their examination of the written product, fifteen percent of the instructors have discarded the outline altogether.

Every issue is a learning situation, and as the committee members—some would prefer the term editorial board—work closely together, a feeling of comaraderie develops. Those of us involved always remark concerning what we have learned from each other about the process of writing and then reflect on the truth that each of us has learned even more about ourselves in our decisions about what to include and why. Since so far we have followed the policy of accepting only above-average and superior efforts of the student, reading sessions are almost celebratory exercises as we sample the best our students have to offer. We find that we each gain confidence in our critical judgement as we discuss the criteria for acceptance and then mark separately the papers first as U(unacceptable) or A(acceptable) and then 1(superior), 2(above

average) and 3(average). The choices for the issue are made from A^1 and A^2 papers. Seeing the newest issue always engenders a feeling of elation as we find that print gives status to our efforts, and although essays assigned in the classroom have a brief life, this magazine has a satisfying permanency. In addition we take pride in the knowledge that the magazine is in demand by student readers and that it is self-supporting.

Since joining the editorial board is voluntary and the members work very hard, professional rewards have to be there for them, too. The policy of a rotating editor with each board member editing two issues gives the faculty member a chance to alter the format or the focus of the magazine, to collect data on student writing for classroom research, the opportunity to be recognized campus-wide, the master of ceremonies at a reception honoring the published authors and their parents, a speaker at local, state, and national conferences, and a composition conference planner as funds have been pledged to the editorial board by the administration for a national conference next year. The magazine has also been an instrument for career advancement as each member is given practice in writing program administration. One board member or committee member has already realized such benefits as she was selected chairperson of the department of English at a neighboring college and had no prior administrative experience except for her work on The Polishing Cloth. The instructor informed us how important the magazine was to her promotion as she not only provided a copy of the magazine in the interview but also a plan for starting

one at that institution.

Even the part-time or adjunct instructor benefits from using The Polishing Cloth and participating in the submission process. Since these teachers are not involved in English department policy-making decisions, many do not know what is expected of them beyond the skeleton outline and the textbooks they receive at the beginning of the quarter. The Polishing Cloth fleshes out the syllabus and allows adjuncts to know what level of composition to anticipate from students at a junior college campus; they see the English program at a glance by reviewing the publication and discovering how their courses fit into the picture. They have more confidence in their teaching and their grading procedure after reading the magazine; in fact, so successful has it been in clarifying the English program that the administration has adopted it as a part timer's articulation instrument during the fall faculty forum. Of course, as they submit their papers to the committee, the adjunct faculty enter into the curriculum process and that type of involvement with the faculty means that part-time teaching can more easily translate into full-time employment if that is a career goal. Moreover, The Polishing Cloth is a connecting link for another part timer, the English joint enrollment teacher, who teaches classes in the high school for college credit—a program that has been instituted on a grand scale in DeKalb,Fulton, and Gwinnett counties in Georgia. The isolation of that program at times turns it into an advanced high school course, but with the joint enrollment students' reading

and discussing other college students' writing and in submitting their own, they identify with DeKalb College and its level of attainment, and in turn the older, traditional students find out the concerns of the high school senior.

The high school English teacher also has discovered uses for the freshman writing magazine. Historically, Charles W. Roberts, Chairman of the Rhetoric Department of the University of Illinois in the 1940's, -50's and early -60's, realized that The Green Caldron was a powerful articulation instrument in helping high school students in all areas of the state of Illinois know what was expected in the college English course before they enrolled at the University of Illinois. In DeKalb County and surrounding areas, the need for that same type of communication is evident on a smaller scale as the committee donates several hundred copies of the magazine to area writing centers and as we utilize the publication in our brainstorming sessions with high school teachers to discuss approaches to composition. In addition, we have followed The Green Caldron's policy of giving credit to the high school teacher for the level of the students' writing by printing the high schools on the back of the magazine. Such recognition is warranted since the students' writing skills are very often a result of their high school training. Even though a 1984 articulation survey involving the English departments of DeKalb County high schools and DeKalb College revealed an agreement on writing goals, the report showed that the high school teacher very often utilized original approaches to composition which many of us college teachers have since infused into our

own teaching. The Polishing Cloth served as an important focal point in a meaningful exchange of modes of instruction to achieve greater literacy. Since Atlanta is an international city, the back cover of The Polishing Cloth not only records high schools throughout the United States but also secondary schools in Vietnam, Ireland, Germany, Iran, and South America, introducing an opportunity to achieve national and global exchange of student writing.

The administration is a winner, too, in its support of the writing magazine. The publication can be used in student and faculty recruitment as the publication is proof of good student writing and dedicated English faculty. Certainly the magazine is a tool for promotion of the administration's writing across the curriculum program as the journals serve as ways to introduce writing into the classroom, the timely pro-con argumentative topics generate lively student response both oral and written, and the MLA style in the research papers included helps the students with their written reports, campus-wide. Our editors have included joint papers from the political science and English departments; a history paper in response to a college symposium on the American Indians, and a psychology paper analyzing a students' reaction to a march for social equality in Forsyth County, Georgia. Many more papers from other disciplines will follow, and as a result of that interest, the next member invited to join The Polishing Cloth committee or Editorial Board will be a member from the campus-wide Writing Across the Curriculum committee.

The North Campus Dean, Gretchen Neill, has also cited The Polishing Cloth as a retention factor because it allows the highly transient junior college students to identify with a college magazine and their emergence as published writers. Furthermore the magazine is used as a text by many instructors teaching DCC 101—a guide to college success; statistics from its counterpart at the University of South Carolina and similar orientation courses throughout the United States reveal that the study skills course is a significant factor in student retention. To reinforce the college tie with The Polishing Cloth, the administration is also well represented at an elegant reception given annually in the student authors' and their parents' honor. As the college seeks to build its newly organized alumni association and foundation, the students receiving that special recognition may be more likely to be active members and willing contributors.

Alongside the other beneficial factors mentioned, the administration has found that The Polishing Cloth has given the college status. The story of the birth of the magazine has been presented at two National Conference of the Teachers of English CCCC conventions in New Orleans in 1986, and in Atlanta in 1987. The Writing Program Administrator's Conference at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, also invited me to tell "How to Start a Composition Magazine and Why" at its 1986 summer meeting. At that gathering of leaders in the field of freshman composition such as Maxine Hairston of the University of Texas, Winifred Horner at Texas Christian University, Lynn Bloom at the Virginia Commonwealth

University, and Joseph Trimmer at Ball State University—Edward J. Corbett, a noted Ohio State rhetorician, delivered the keynote address, recounting the rhetoric movement throughout the United States. He particularly acknowledged the efforts of the University of Illinois Chairman of the Rhetoric Department, Charles W. Roberts and his writing magazine, The Green Caldron. During that meeting, I presented him copies of the first four issues of The Polishing Cloth which he pronounced as successor to The Green Caldron with the words, "Now your college is in the history book." It is very satisfying for a junior college that is only twenty-two years old to be included in the rhetoric tradition of well established universities.

Finally the publishing of a total of sixteen essays in Harcourt-Brace's Rewriting Writing: A Rhetoric and in Rhetoric Made Plain has convinced the administration that the student writers at DeKalb College compare favorably with not only those at two year colleges but also students at four year colleges and universities. In the preface of Rewriting Writing: A Rhetoric the authors Jo Ray McCuen and Anthony C. Winkler recognized the efforts of The Polishing Cloth Editorial Board and the role of the publication:

> Some of the student written material used in this book was taken from The Polishing Cloth, a faculty-supervised collection of student essays published by DeKalb Community College, Georgia. An ambitious magazine that gives students a well-deserved outlet for

> expository writing done to satisfy class assignments, The Polishing Cloth has proven to be a useful pedagogical tool as well as a medium in which the superior efforts of the beginning essayists may be acknowledged.
>
> (McCuen and Winkler VI)

It is my hope that the citing of the reasons to start a freshman writing magazine will convince other schools regardless of level and size to begin one of their own. The magazine is self-supporting and does not rely on school funds; therefore the sale of the magazine is determined by student and teacher demand. That factor alone makes the magazine receptive to the changes in the curriculum and to the needs of the student. It is a way for each institution to write its own English composition textbook and to include the aspects of that course work that will uniquely relate to a particular student body and at the same time to join in the rhetoric tradition of stimulating and elevating student writing and giving the student writer a larger audience. In her detailed study of classroom practices and interaction M. Trika Smith-Burke comes to the following conclusion:

> The research points to the importance of prior knowledge for reading, writing, and future learning, yet there seems to be no systematic thinking about what content to teach and how to provide access to all students. With the knowledge explosion promoted by technology, this concern is even more important so

> that we do not end up with a bimodal society of elite and uneducated masses. Therefore, my closing suggestion is that we try to define what we want students to learn, both socially and academically, in order to develop into literate, well-informed citizens who can function actively as members of a democratic society in the twenty-first century.
>
> (253)

The Polishing Cloth or any freshman writing magazine is one instrument to aid in reaching that goal.

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